



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

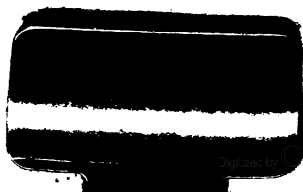
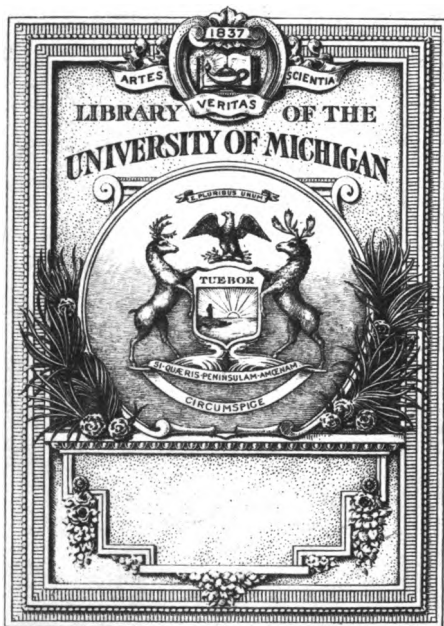
We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



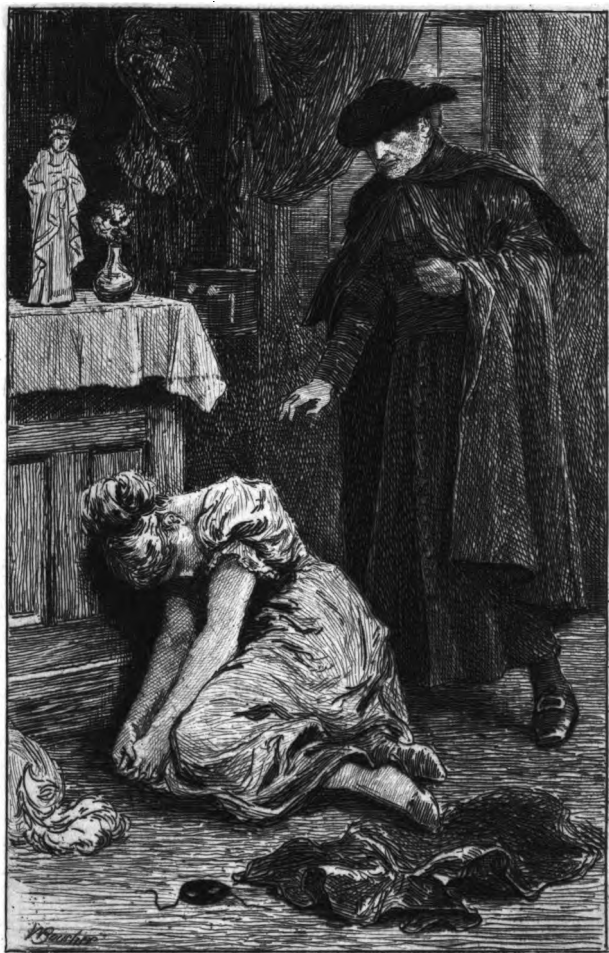


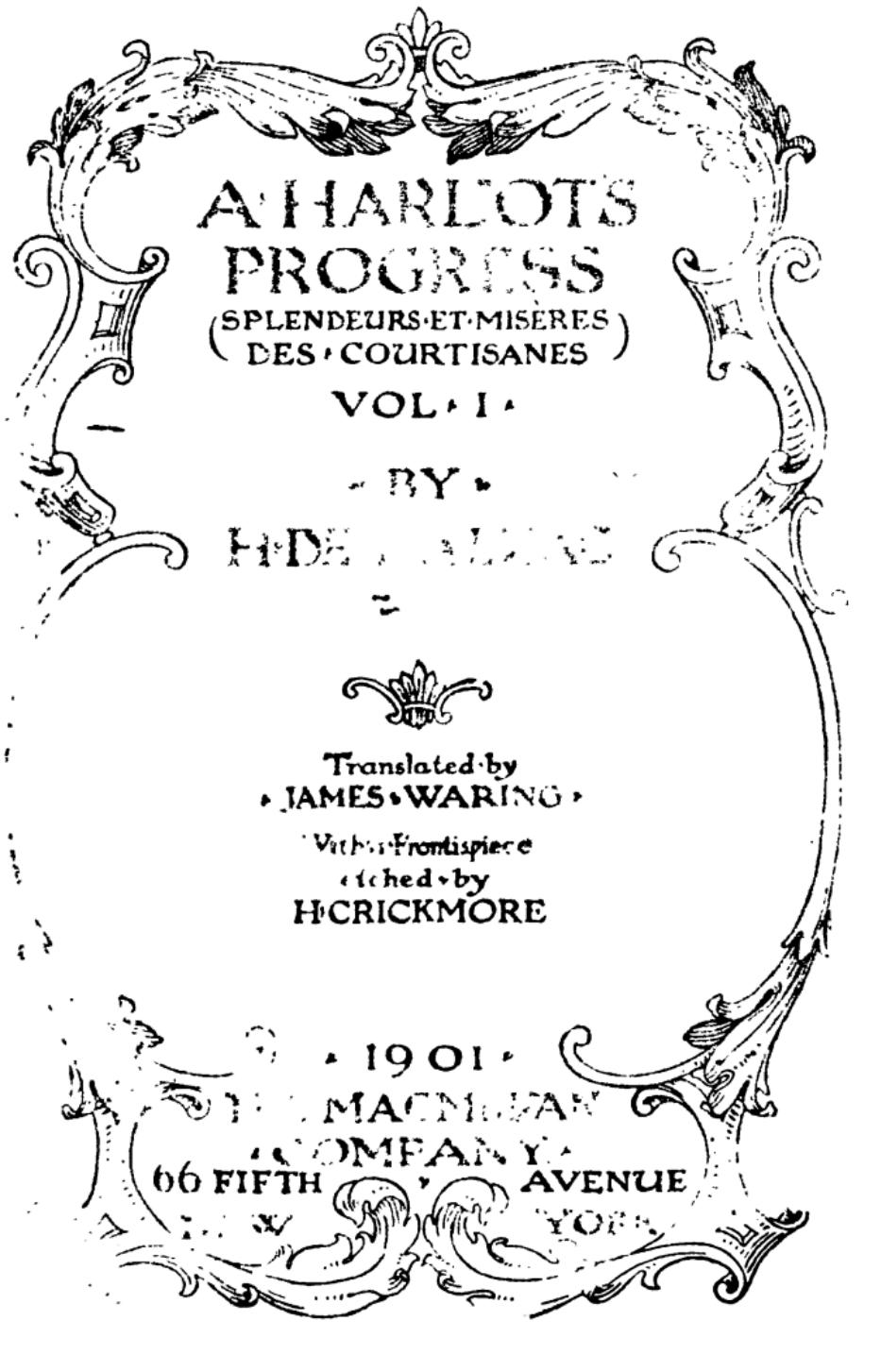
848
B2a
tW

THE TEMPLE EDITION
OF THE
COMÉDIE HUMAINE

Edited by
GEORGE SAINTSBURY

All rights reserved





**A HARLOT'S
PROGRESS**

(SPLENDEURS ET MISÈRES
DES COURTISANES)

VOL. I.

BY

HIDEALINE



Translated by
JAMES WARING

With Frontispiece
etched by
H. CRICKMORE

1901

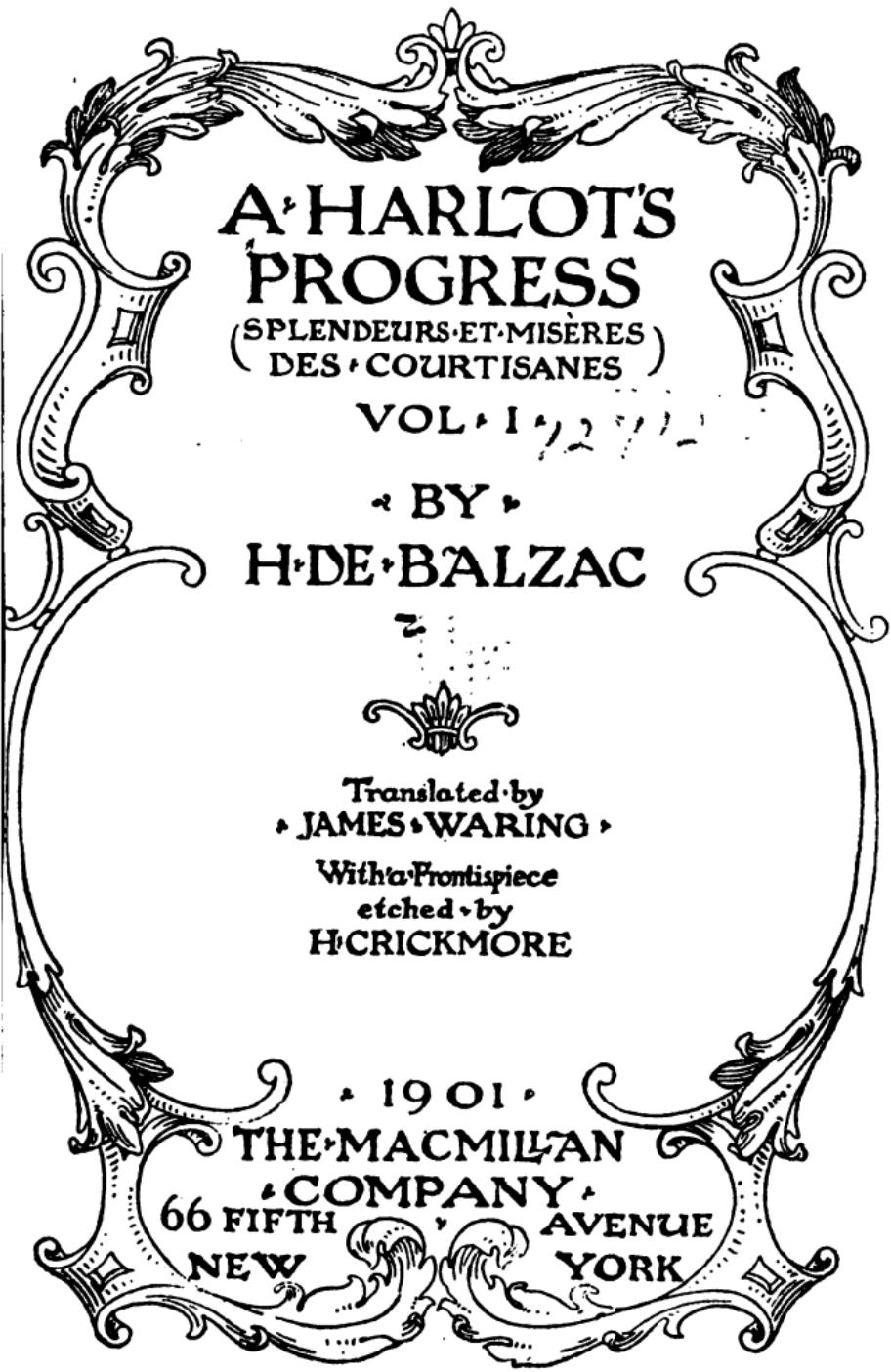
THE MACMILLAN
COMPANY

66 FIFTH

AVENUE

NEW YORK





**A HARLOT'S
PROGRESS**

(SPLENDEURS ET MISÈRES
DES COURTISANES)

VOL. I 12711

• BY •

H. DE BALZAC



Translated by
• JAMES WARING •

With a Frontispiece
etched by
H. CRICKMORE

• 1901 •

**THE MACMILLAN
COMPANY**
66 FIFTH AVENUE
NEW YORK

...

CONTENTS

	PAGE
<i>PREFACE</i>	xi
<i>A HARLOT'S PROGRESS—</i>	
ESTHER HAPPY	I
WHAT LOVE COSTS AN OLD MAN	171

PREFACE

Splendeurs et Misères des Courtisanes has the interest (which it shares with only one or two others of Balzac's works), if not exactly of touching the two extremities of his prosperous career, at any rate of stretching over a great part of it. It also exemplifies the very uncertain and fortuitous scheme of the *Comédie* and its component scenes. At first nothing of it appeared but the first part, and only half of that, under the title of *La Torpille* (Esther Gobseck's nickname), which was published, together with *La Femme Supérieure*, the first form of *Les Employés*, and *La Maison Nucingen*, in 1838. Five years later it appeared in a newspaper as *Esther, ou Les Amours d'un vieux Banquier*, the first part being now completed, and the second added. It was not till 1846 that *Cu mènent les mauvais Chemins* appeared, and this book itself had different titles. Finally, in Balzac's very last period of writing at the end of 1846, or the beginning of 1847—for he and his bibliographer are at issue on that point,—*La dernière Incarnation de Vautrin* was added as a fourth part, making the book, already one of the longest, now by far the longest of all. But the four were not published together till the *édition définitive*, many years after Balzac's death.

It would in any case have been necessary to devote two of these volumes to so great a mass of matter, and I have taken the liberty of separating *Vautrin* from the rest for the purposes of introduction. The truth is that the book ends much more artistically with *Ou mènent les mauvais Chemins*; and if Balzac really intended to make *La dernière Incarnation de Vautrin* a continuation, this, as well as the great length of the book, would lead me to imagine that he had in mind rather a sort of subdivision of the *Scènes de la Vie Parisienne* than a single work.

For it must be at once evident that with the deaths of Esther and of Lucien, art, sense, and truth require that the curtain should fall. It may have been very desirable to finish off Vautrin; and, as I shall have occasion to point out, he is a very interesting person. But his *mauvais chemin* is quite a different one from that of Esther; and he is only indirectly concerned with the particular *splendeurs et misères*.

On the other hand, the history of 'La Torpille' and of Lucien de Rubempré is by itself smoother and more complete. It affords Balzac, no doubt, opportunities of indulging a very large number of his extensive assortment of fancies, not to say fads, and of bringing in a great number of the personages of his stock company. Vautrin, the terrible and mysterious, in his new avatar, is only one of these. Corentin reappears from the far distance of *Les Chouans*; but playing no very dissimilar part, though his machinations are directed against less innocent persons. We receive abundant information as to the way in which Baron Nucingen got rid of the money which he obtained by means already detailed with equal

care elsewhere. Madame de Maufrigneuse and Madame de Sérizy play important parts ; and many others come and go.

But still Esther van Gobseck and Lucien Chardon de Rubempré are as much the hero and heroine of the story, and make the first three parts as much a story to themselves, as Le Père Goriot and Eugénie Grandet are the hero and heroine of the books to which they very justly give their names.

I forget whether Lucien de Rubempré, in the numerous and rather idle Balzac ' keys ' which MM. Cerfberr and Christophe have not deigned to include in their *Répertoire*, is identified with any actual personage. It has been, and will be observed, that Balzac was too great an artist either to need, or, indeed, often to attempt, this commonplace and catchpenny means of interest. But in the world of fiction in general, and of the *Comédie* in particular, Lucien is half-complement, half-counterpart of Eugène de Rastignac. He is the adventurer, not entirely without good blood in his veins, who ventures into the intersecting or overlapping worlds of fashion, of journalism, of speculation, and of politics, but who has not, like Rastignac, either strength or coolness of head to swim through the whirlpool and reach the shore. It may be interesting to the reader to form his own opinion how far Lucien's ruin—brought about, be it remembered, by charges of which he is actually innocent—is due to the evil, though not in his case intentionally hostile, influence of Vautrin, how far it is due to his own weakness. Balzac was too much of an artist to decide very definitely either way ; but despite his rather mistaken admiration of Vautrin, I think he had the sense to

give most weight to the internal causes. The moral—for there is always a moral in Balzac—is, of course, the old one of a thousand fables and a thousand forms, the best of which perhaps is the Spenserian apposition of ‘Be bold, be bold, and everywhere be bold,’ with ‘Be not *too* bold’—the moral that on the ‘Brigg of Dread’ of ambition and covetousness there is nothing but absolute perdition for him who cannot keep his feet and his head. There is not perhaps so much irony as there would be in some writers about the presentation of Lucien, who is really a poor creature enough, as the very darling of all the great ladies of Paris as well as of persons at the other end of the scale; but it is there.

With Esther it is even plainer sailing. Her history is simply a ‘Harlot’s Progress’ on a more fantastic and gorgeous scale, with the final fortune thrown in (this applies to Lucien as well as to her) for a climax of Nemesis. Perhaps there is another moral here—that when any one has once embarked on this particular *mauvais chemin* it is not merely idle, but ruinous, to indulge in sincere affection for anybody—that you must ‘play the game,’ here as elsewhere, and that you cannot be permitted to play the fair game and the foul at once.

On the whole, I should put this book a little below Balzac’s very best, but in the forefront of his average work. Some I know have rated it very highly; but such a slightly glorified ‘Alphonse’ as Rubempré is too disgusting a hero to be tolerated without even greater power than Balzac has here put forth, even though Esther to no small extent redeems him.